

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging that claims 2, 7, 9 and 14 contain allowable subject matter. Applicant respectfully requests that the foregoing amendments be entered at least because they fail to raise any new issues requiring further search or consideration, and because they place the application in condition for allowance.

Claims 2, 7, 9 and 14 are cancelled. Claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 11 and 13 are currently amended.

This amendment changes and deletes claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1, 3, 6, 8, 10 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,333,490 ("Higashi et al.") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,899,599 ("Kato"). Claims 4 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Higashi et al. in view of Kato, in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,301,454 ("Nishida et al."). Claims 5 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Higashi in view of Kato and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,061,546 ("Sawamura et al.").

In response, without agreeing or acquiescing to the rejection, Applicant cancels claims 2, 7, 9 and 14 and amends claims 1, 4, 6, 8, 11 and 13.

Specifically, Applicant amends claim 1 to include all the limitations of allowable claim 2. Claims 3-5 now depend upon amended claim 1. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn and claims 1 and 3-5 be allowed.

In addition, claim 6 is amended to include all the limitations of allowable claim 7. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn and claim 6 be allowed.

Further, Applicant amends claim 8 to include all the limitations of allowable claim 9. Claims 10-12 are now dependent upon amended claim 8. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn and claims 8 and 10-12 be allowed.

Lastly, Applicant amends claim 13 to include all the limitations of allowable claim 14. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn and claim 13 be allowed.

Conclusion

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1, 3-6, 8 and 10-13 are now pending in this application. Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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